



# Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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## Brokenness

Life can be hard. Most of us, at one time or another, have been battered by life. Some of us saw it coming, but couldn't avoid it. Others of us were blindsided, caught unaware and unprepared for the trauma that enveloped us.

While such occasions are not rare, most of us are able to point to one or two particular occasions where we were stretched to, and even beyond, the point of breaking. Perhaps it involved relationship struggles, business betrayal, financial collapse, or an assault to our health. Whatever the cause, our strength gave way, our image collapsed, and, perhaps for the first time, we felt totally at the mercy (or lack thereof) of the forces around us.

Rather than being pillars of competence and stability, we became more like frightened children, struggling to make decisions, find meaning, and imagine a future. Time passed, often with more cloudiness than clarity. Eventually, we regained our strength, reshaped our focus, and reengaged with life.

Questions frequently follow such an experience, such as "What was this

about?" and "Why did this happen?" Is the world and our fellow man simply unsafe and hurtful? Is life just a progression of pain? Is there a hope for a better future, or must we simply wait for the next onslaught?

Such are the questions that come from wounding and brokenness. To better understand the experience of crisis and brokenness, let's note a few truths.

1. The world can indeed be an unsafe place of meanness, betrayal, and indifference. Harm can come to the body, mind, and spirit with little to no warning.

2. The world is also an incredibly beautiful place offering inspiration, refreshment, fellowship, and love.

3. While the world can wound us to the point of breaking, it frequently does so with our cooperation. To be sure, there are times when we are purely the victims of a broken world and its flawed residents. But there are many times when we set ourselves up and invite the trauma that envelops us.

How do we do this? Consider the following partial list of personality traits and behaviors that invite trauma from those willing to deliver it.

- pride, arrogance, haughtiness
- bitterness and resentment
- unwillingness to forgive
- inability to accept forgiveness
- impatience with others
- unwillingness to serve others
- insisting on having things our way
- emotional coldness, aloofness
- an absence of thankfulness
- an attitude of entitlement
- isolating self-sufficiency
- finding our value in what we possess
- paralyzing fear of failure or rejection
- over-dependency and neediness
- dishonesty
- emphasizing image over substance
- neglectful ignorance of life's realities
- trusting others without basis
- ignoring personal core values
- blindness to our own weaknesses
- ignoring or neglecting our relationship with the eternal God

Such characteristics not only invite crisis, but may also be the very part of ourself that needs to be broken so we can grow beyond their limiting influence.

Let's take an honest look at ourselves and dare to identify what it is that invites crisis into our life and draws us into our crushing struggles.

It's time for change.



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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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## Spirituality and Brokenness

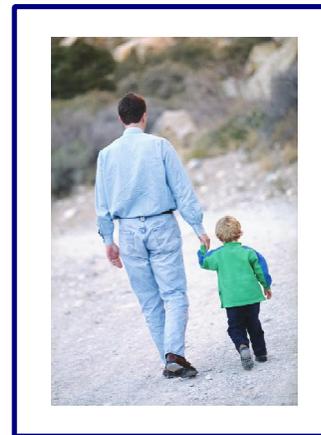
A long-time friend known for his active life-style broke his nose while playing basketball as a teen. Ever since, his nose was a bit crooked. As he aged, he developed problems with his breathing and with snoring during sleep. His doctor said that his nose had never healed properly from the original break. His solution was to re-break the nose and properly set it so it could heal (and function) as it was meant to. He wanted to break it to make it better!

So it is in our relationship with our God. The Christian faith recognizes that while our God created us as we were meant to be, our rebellion against Him invited flaws and brokenness into our selves and into the world.

Rather than abandoning us to our own designs, our loving God at times uses crisis in our lives to crush the part of us that is getting in our way and limiting our effectiveness in our world. He "breaks our impaired nose", resets it, and heals it so He can better use us in His service.

Crisis and brokenness, then, need not be seen simply as destructive elements of a chaotic world. Our God is at work, and He will do what it takes to shape His children into the tool He can best use to accomplish His good purposes.

So let's pay attention and learn. This pain can lead to great gain!



"The dominant characteristic of an authentic spiritual life is the gratitude that flows from trust - not only for all the gifts I receive from God, but gratitude for all the suffering. Because in that purifying experience, suffering has often been the shortest path to intimacy with God."

- Brennan Manning